ice: Free
Issue Date: 04/2026

SLACKERFRIEND®

SPECIAL ISSUE:

Company House: Feeling To Run

Company House is a Cape Breton indie rock band blending psychedelic textures with a laid-back modern sound. The band is **Joey McCarthy** on guitar and vocals, **Nick Abraham** on guitar, vocals, and keyboards, **Aaron Ross** on bass, and **Jack Summerell** on drums. Their sound is layered guitars, warm melodies, and vintage-style keys inspired by 60s tones, & their music draws from artists like The Beatles, Dr. Dog, and Mystic Braves.

Speaking with them for their **first-ever interview** in their rehearsal space on a cold mid-February night, they discussed their influences, their **upcoming debut show** on **April 24th 2026 at Daniel's Alehouse**, recording & releasing the debut LP, and their absolute feeling to run!.

Let's start with Joey McCarthy, guitarist and vocalist for Company House, and formerly of Superfuzz. Is that right?

Joey McCarthy (guitar/vox): Yeah.

When did music become essential and what early influences shaped you?

Joey: I was about 12. The Beatles. That's it. They shaped everything I do, and they still do.

Were there any other influences on your music, or just The Beatles?

Joey: They came later. When I met Nick in high school, we took a rock band course at Breton Education Centre. That's when I got into Led Zeppelin, Black Sabbath, and '70s rock. I worked through the decades from there. Skipped most of the '80s. Now I'm really into modern indie.

That first band that you mentioned, in school, for a rock class, who were the other members of that band, and did you guys record anything in that class?

Joey: It was a class with a lot of people. Nick and I met there. We learned some GarageBand recording, did projects together in grades 11 and 12. I don't remember the songs, but we worked on them together.

Did that band ever perform?

Joey: Just at school. It wasn't a real band. We were learning. Setting up gear, soldering cables, recording, playing for the school.

How has your singing and performance evolved since Superfuzz, and what parts of your younger self do you still bring to the stage today?

Joey: A lot since Superfuzz. Back then I mostly screamed. Now it's more controlled. Not perfect, but better. Everything I've learned I've held onto. The core of my performance is still there.

Now let's turn to Nicholas Abraham; Guitarist, vocalist, and keyboardist for Company House, and formerly of Superfuzz.

How did music and your upbringing inspire your musical creativity?

Nicholas Abraham (Guitar/Keys/Vox): I was in grade five or six when Guitar Hero came out. "Strutter" by KISS hooked me. Then I got into KISS, started playing guitar, moved into Guns N' Roses. By grade eight, I found The Beatles, and that changed everything.

What did your old band Superfuzz teach you?

Nick: It helped me figure out what I want to sound like. I still like that raw style, but now I understand production more. It's somewhere between Black Sabbath and The Black Keys.

How did Superfuzz break up and what led to the deformation of that band?

Nick: We had a gig coming up, missed a practice, things built up. We called out the drummer, and he quit the night of the show.

Joey: We were young and putting too much pressure on it. People had other things going on, such as graduation, and moving forward with life. It wasn't the right time for everyone.

Before Superfuzz, you recorded something on your own?

Nick: Yeah, just me. I entered a contest, won studio time, and used friends Craig McIsaac (bass), and Zachary MacDonald (drums), as backing musicians. It wasn't really a band.

Shifting gears to chat with Aaron Ross, the bassist for Company House.

Aaron, you were with Rebecca's Room before joining Company House. What drew you to the bass?

Aaron (Bass): My cousin Eric got a guitar, so I picked up bass. That was it.

So how did playing in Rebecca's Room shape your early influences on creating music?

Aaron: I was more of a fill-in. That was my first time playing live, but I was playing someone else's material. Before that, I was in a band called Bungalow. We never played a show.

What's different with Company House?

Aaron: More freedom. Sometimes there's direction, but a lot of it is just what I come up with.

Any other projects previous projects?

Aaron: I played with Gravel Road at Crab Fest. First time playing with the drummer, Paul Garland, was on stage.

Great, thanks! Now let's turn to Jack Summerell, the drummer for Company House.

Jack, who or what got you to pick up the sticks?

Jack Summerell (Drums): My mom's a music teacher, so instruments were always around. I don't remember specifically choosing drums. I just started.

Jack: An early influence for me, like Nick also stated, was KISS. My mom hyped up Peter Criss's drum fill in "I Was Made for Lovin' You." That stuck.

Is this your first gigging band or have you been in other bands previously?

Jack: After moving back from Ottawa in 2022. I joined a local group doing DIY shows, then played with Full Circle for about a year, doing two or three gigs a week.

How would you compare the Ottawa music scene to the Cape Breton music scene?

Jack: Ottawa had more variety. Different venues for different styles. Here, it's a lot of the same songs and covers. There's room for something different.

So how did Company House first take shape?

Nick: I had the itch that I always wanted to record an album. Around 2023, we started buying gear and building toward it.

Joey: We kept adding equipment over time. Recording started in March 2025 and took about ten months. Everything was finished early 2026.

Were there any earlier band names, band members, or sonic directions before this lineup solidified?

Nick: A lot of bad ones.

Joey: "Mud Moon".

Nick: "8:30 Whistle", but we couldn't use that, due to local solo artist/actor Andrew Gillis already using the name for his solo work.

Joey: "Company House" just fit better.

As far as sonic directions go, were there any different styles of music or anything before you guys settled in on the sound that you're settling in on?

Joey: Not really, as Nick set the tone for how he wanted it all to sound. I adapted my songs to fit that direction he was searching for.

Besides the obvious musical influences, are there any surprising inspirations in this record that people who know you might not expect?

Nick: A lot comes from Jefferson Airplane, specifically their LP, 1967's *Surrealistic Pillow* and "Somebody To Love" The Animals, and the more modern band, The Mystic Braves, especially the guitar tones and effects featured within their work.

Aaron: The organ plays a big role too.

Joey: For me, Dr. Dog is huge. That was my entry into indie, and that's where I'm aiming with my songwriting.

And so Company House just released a press release saying the LP is going to be due in April 2026?

Band: That's correct.

So when did the writing for this record really begin? And where were the songs recorded?

Nick: Honestly? Some of these songs go way back, like 15 years. "**Waiting There for Me**" "**Hoping That It Stays**", and "**Feeling to Run**", were written with the style of this record in mind. "**Waiting There for Me**" I wrote in grade 10. I always wanted to do something with it, and finally did. "**Hoping That It Stays**" I wrote in 2019, not for this album, but there was a cool lick I wanted to use. Songs like "**The Way**" and "**Feeling to Run**" were definitely written with that trippy, reverb-y, spacey vibe in mind. Not sure how else to describe it.

Joey: For me, "**No Difference**" goes back to 2017. Totally different back then: different lyrics, different everything. You just kind of get better with words as you go, and that's where it ended up.

Joey: Some of my more recent songs came out during COVID, such as "**She's a Keeper**" and "**Far Away**". "**How You Hold On**" was written just before COVID hit, literally the

day before everything locked down. That's pretty much the timeline for the songs I wrote.

Nick: We built everything ourselves. Started buying gear in 2023, recorded at Joey's house in Sydney, from March 2025 to January 2026.

Joey: We actually started recording Jack on drums back in March 2025. At that point, we had everything ready.

Joey: It took about 10 months to get the whole album recorded; our last session was in January 2026. Everything got mixed and mastered by February, and the mastering itself just wrapped up about a week ago.

What core themes run through these eight songs on the LP?

Joey: A lot of mine are about relationships. "**She's a Keeper**" is different, it's about living with psoriasis, which I wrote during COVID in 2019 or 2020.

Would you say that these eight songs are different chapters of your guys' lives?

Nick: Not really. Some are so old I don't even know what parts of them originally meant, such as "**Waiting There For Me**".

Were there any finished songs that didn't make the record and might be released later as B-sides or standalone tracks?

Company House: We have other songs, but nothing that was seriously in contention once we committed to the album. Early on, we considered doing ten tracks, maybe more, but we decided to keep it to eight. That way we didn't have to cut anything later or stretch the record too far.

Company House: There are a lot of unfinished ideas, but the eight songs we chose were locked in pretty early once we made that decision.

Were there any titles from those extra tracks?

Nick: One was called "**Don't Shine**", but that's shelved indefinitely.

Joey: I had ideas like a song called "**Clementine**", but it's changed since then. Most of

what I've written outside the album came after, so nothing else was close to making the cut.

With this release you guys are self-releasing it on your own DIY label Half House Records. How did the label come into existence?

Joey: We needed a label name, so I kept it simple. We're Company House, and the artwork is based on a half company house, so Half House Records just made sense. It might sound a bit odd at first, but it comes straight from the image on the cover. That's all it is.

What motivated you guys to self-release the record?

All: Money.

Jack: Or lack of it.

Nick: Also just wanting to do it ourselves.

Joey: We rushed things in the past because of money. This time, we wanted full control and time to build the songs properly.

Joey: We had to self-release, obviously. It just makes sense for a new band. And yeah, money was always the big thing. We'd tried recording before with Superfuzz, our unreleased EP. Only a couple songs ever came out. We were 19, working at McDonald's, trying to pay rent, and $60 was a lot back then. Recording was rushed. Honestly, that's why it sounds rough. Others might hear it differently, but that's how I feel.

Nick: That experience made me want to do it ourselves, on our own time. Once you hear a song back, you realize you might want to change something; a guitar part, a harmony. You want that freedom to hear all the instruments together.

Joey: Totally. A lot of the lead guitar parts on this album came after the songs were already recorded. "**How You Hold On**" got finished a month or two ago, same with "**No Difference**." Nick's songs I thought about a bit longer, but mine were more like, "Here's the song, what's the cherry on top?" I'd just come up with it on the spot.

Nick: That's the kind of freedom we wanted; recording ourselves, layering everything, instead of rushing into a studio hoping it works. Some stuff is straightforward, sure, but most of our songs have at least three guitar parts. You can't always hear them all, but they're there.

When you were in the studio, what felt instinctive in your playing, and what parts were planned ahead of time?

Nick: Yeah, for songs like "**The Way**", I pretty much knew every part in my head before recording, except bass and drums, I left that to Aaron & Jack. Keyboards, guitars, I had those mapped out. Other songs, we'd lay down the basic tracks first, and I'd just play around with whatever I could add. The bass was mostly planned, but a lot of the lead guitar stuff? That came instinctively after everything else was done.

Were there any recording challenges you faced recording this way?

Aaron: Playing live, you can mess up and be the only one who notices. Recording is different; you have to get it right.

Aaron: It's also harder than I expected. I tried recording in a studio before, and it didn't go well. With Company House, the pressure was lower. Not gone, but different. We weren't paying by the hour. That makes a big difference.

Aaron: Live, it's more relaxed. If you mess up, it doesn't really matter. Most people won't notice, especially in a bar setting.

Jack: On drums, if you speed up or slow down live, the band just follows. Everything flows together. In recording, that doesn't work. Everything's tracked separately, so timing has to be consistent.

Jack: Playing to a metronome felt strange at first. I didn't realize how much I relied on the band's feel. You have to simplify things and focus on spacing, so everyone has something solid to lock into.

Jack: Live, though, it's like Aaron said, small mistakes don't stop anything. The whole thing just keeps moving like a train.

Who did the artwork for the, for the LP & singles and how did that collaboration come about?

Nick: Frederick. I can't pronounce his last name, it's German. But yeah, he's from Germany, and we got him to do the artwork.

Joey: I came up with the original design idea, and he

made it look professional. I'm not an artist, but I had the concept. We wanted something that fit a psychedelic rock vibe. Nick really wanted a moon in there, so that became a big part of the logo.

Joey: I actually mocked it up on my phone at work. It didn't look great, but the idea was there. With the name Company House, we thought of the half houses you see around Cape Breton. There are a couple that stand out. It's an iconic look, so we based the artwork on that.

Joey: For the singles, I just worked off the album cover and adapted it. Canva made that easy. I'm not great with design, but it helped keep everything cohesive.

After more than a year as a band, when can listeners expect to see you live?

Band: Shortly after the album release on April 24th, at Daniel's Alehouse, in Sydney, NS.

Any specific venues in Cape Breton you're eager to play?

Nick: Centre 200.

Jack: Festival stages.

Aaron: Army & Navy.

Joey: The Rack & Roll. They should change the name back to The Swingin' Tit, I'd love to say I played at The Swingin' Tit!

Nick: Rock the Fiddle. The one gig I'm really hoping for before I die is Rock the Fiddle. It could happen.

What kind of experience are you hoping to create for the audience when you play live in Cape Breton?

Nick: Something immersive, where people can get lost in the music.

Joey: I just want people to enjoy it.

Aaron: A good time.

Jack: Something dynamic. Loud when it needs to be, and softer, more pulled back when it matters.

What local bands are you listening to right now?

Joey: Conductor. **Aaron:** Broken Road. **Jack:** 10-SLIP. **Nick:** Willie Stratton; he's fucking cool and a great mixer. **Jack:** Elyse Aeryn's sick too, and Garrett Taylor as well.

How does the local scene influence or challenge you guys as a band?

Band: There isn't much locally that sounds like what we're doing. Most shows lean heavier. We'd fit better in a more diverse lineup.

The first single is "The Way". Why was "The Way" the right introduction to Company House?

Joey: "**The Way**" was of the song that started everything.

Nick: It captures the sound I had in mind: psychedelic, melodic, and an eerie feel.

And was "No Difference" always going to be the second single? Why that song?

Joey: The production stood out. It came together naturally, and I was proud of how it sounded.

Was that the first choice as the second single?

Joey: "**No Difference**" wasn't the original choice for the second single. "**She's the Keeper**" was. But after recording "**No Difference**", I was especially proud of its spontaneous, layered production. It came together naturally from a basic demo, and its sound excited him more, so I chose it instead.

What's next for Company House? Any Music Videos planned?

Joey: The album drops April 24, 2026. We've got more songs and ideas in the works for a post-LP single, and we'd love to do music videos, but it just comes down to time and money.